textile industry including the weaving and processing sector. The intended objective is to improve production and productivity of the Indian textile industry to make it more competitive, including in the export market. Details of a Technology Upgradation Fund for textiles and Jute industires are being worked out in this regard. As regards sericulture and wool, upgradation of processing facilities have been identified as thrust areas to be taken up during the 9th Five Year Plan Period, and schemes for this purpose are presently under formulation.

[English]

Achievements by NRF

6476. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Renewal Fund has failed in its objectives of availing jobs for rationalized workmen;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the gist of its achievements during the last three years ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. Assistance from National Renewal Fund which has been set up to provide a social safety net for rationalised workers, affected by industrial restructuring, is being provided at present, for voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) in Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) and counselling, retraining and redeployment assistance to rationalised workers in the organised sector.

As on 31.3.97, 1,04,299 workers have opted for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) in the Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs). Additionally, 30,433 rationalised workers have been counselled, 22,925 retrained and 5962 redeployed by the Employee Assistance Centres (EACs) set up under NRF.

Exploitation of Catechu Reserves

6477. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that Kodarma District of Bihar has huge reserves of Catechu and whether the Government are suffering loss worth lakhs of rupees daily due to the exploitation of Catechu reserves by the Catechu Mafia;

(b) if so, whether the Government are taking any concrete steps to prevent the theft of natural Catechu of this area by the Catechu Mafia;

(c) whether the Government propose to launch any Special Campaign for the export of the Catechu deposited in this area; and

(d) if so, the details thereof

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Import of Raw Material

6478 SHRI A. SAMPATH : Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a shortage of materials for the utilisation of Non-Conventional Energy Sources in the country;

(b) if so, the measures being taken by the Government to make it cheaper and easily available;

(c) whether majority of material have to be imported for the use in this sector;

(d) if so, the amount spent on import of Non-Conventional Energy materials during the last three years; and

(e) the measures taken/being taken by the Government to reduce the import and encourage the domestic production of these items ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) to (e) Presently, certain raw materials required for the manufacture of high technology based Non-conventional Energy Systems/ devices such as solar PV cells/modules and number of critical components, assemblies and sub-assemblies required for the manufacture of wind turbine equipments, are being imported. These imports are necessary due to the requirement of high-purity and specialised materials and shortfall in actual domestic production of these materials compared to their demand. At present, the import content in solar photovoltaic modules is about 45% and in wind electric generators is 50-60%. It is estimated that the amount spent on the import of materials/components for use by the manufacturers and promoters of Non-conventional Energy equipments/projects in the last three years has been a round Rs. 1500 crores.

In order to encourage domestic production and to ensure cheap and easy availability of various key raw materials and components required for the generation and utilisation of non-conventional energy sources, the Govern-